

## Sonrise Homeschool Co-op

### *Statement of Faith & Christian Conduct*

#### **Part A - Faith**

**Section 1. The Bible:** We believe that the Bible is the written and authoritative Word of God. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Bible is completely truthful in all it affirms. It bears witness to Jesus Christ, the Living Word and is infallible in its purposes. While reason, experience, and tradition together with the Bible serve to inform truth and life, the Scriptures are the primary and final authority in the rule of faith and practice. (II Timothy 3:16-17; I Peter 1:23 - 25; Hebrews 4:12)

**Section 2. God:** We believe in one God, creator of all things, who has existed from all eternity and revealed Himself in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are one in eternity, deity, and purpose; everlasting, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. (Genesis 1:1-2:22; Psalms 90:2; Psalms 102:25-27; I Timothy 1:17; John 1:1-2; 8:58; Hebrews 1:8; Revelations 1:8; Romans 1:20; Matthew 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

**Section 3. Jesus Christ:** We believe in the incarnation and virgin birth of Jesus Christ who came into the world in human flesh to reveal the Father, being fully God and full man, except without sin. Jesus is the reflection of God's glory and the express image of the Father. Jesus, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is the Creator of all things. We further believe that in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and that He is our savior, the one perfect mediator between God and humanity. We acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord over all things in heaven and in earth, and under the earth. (I Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 1:3; John 1:1-2 & 14; I Timothy 3:16; Acts 7:37-38; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 9:14; Micah 5:2)

**Section 4. Christ's Resurrection and Imminent Return:** We believe in Jesus Christ's sinless life, miracles, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection and His ascension into Heaven. The central purpose of the coming of Jesus Christ was to pay the penalty for man's sin through His substitutionary death on the cross, the successful accomplishment of which was attested to by His subsequent bodily resurrection. He will return in power and glory to judge all people. As His return may occur at any moment, the believer's response is joyous expectation, watchfulness, and diligence. We anticipate His return at which time there will be a new heaven and a new earth, a resurrection of those who are lost to eternal death and those who are saved to eternal life. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 1:3, 11; 3:19-21; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Daniel 7:14; Revelation 14:6, 20:4; 21:3-8, 22:1-5)

**Section 5. The Holy Spirit:** We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is being manifested in the Church through the fruit of the Spirit. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are operative in the Church today in order for the Church to experience the fullness of God. We believe in the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit that begins at regeneration. The Holy Spirit continually empowers a believer to live a holy life like Christ. The evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit is a person's obedient response to the Word of God, a Christlike life of holiness, and manifesting

the fruits of the Holy Spirit. (John 15:26; 16:14; Ephesians 5:18-21; Galatians 5:22-23; I Corinthians 12:11; John 16:13)

**Section 6. The Creation of the Universe and Humanity:** We believe that the universe and all living things (including man), were made by the direct creative acts of God within the 6 (six) literal 24-hour days as described in the book of Genesis. Any biological changes that have occurred since the Creation week have done so within the original created kinds. The special Creation of Adam and Eve in the image of God, and their subsequent fall into sin is the basis for our belief in the necessity of a Savior for all mankind. We believe that humanity was created by a direct act of God, innocent and morally free with the responsibility to choose between good and evil, right and wrong. All people are created by God and in His image and have the same inherent rights regardless of race, gender, or color. (Genesis 1-2; Romans 5:17-19)

**Section 7. The Fall of Humanity:** We believe that all men are in violation of God's righteous requirements and His holy character both by nature and act. Through disobedience, humanity fell from a state of righteousness and holiness into total depravity, a state of sinfulness, unable in their own strength to obtain a right relationship with God and restore His image within. (Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 3:23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-2)

**Section 8. Satan:** We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, a fallen creation of God, who was defeated by Christ through His death, burial and resurrection. Christ has given authority over Satan to the Church. (Matthew 28:18-20; Job 1:7; Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossians 2:15)

**Section 9. Repentance:** We believe that repentance is the result of the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers and non-believers. The conviction of the Holy Spirit, which often accompanies the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will result in the revelation of one's sinfulness which should lead to remorse. Remorse causes us to turn away from sin and selfishness and to accept the free gift of forgiveness through faith in Christ. (II Corinthians 7:10; Psalms 51; Acts 11:18; II Timothy 2:25; Matthew 9:12-13; 1 John 1:9)

**Section 10. Justification:** We believe that repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ results in justification whereby the believer, through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, is accounted as righteous and made free from the guilt and the penalty of their sins. (Romans 5:1-9; 3:21-26, 28; 5:8-9; Luke 22:20)

**Section 11. Salvation:** We believe that by a new relationship with Jesus Christ one is born again and is a new creation. With a new life and a new spiritual nature capable of faith, love, and obedience to Christ, the old life is past and the new life is begun. Salvation is offered as a gift, free to the sinner. This gift must be responded to in individual faith, not trusting in any personal works whatsoever, but in Jesus Christ alone. (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 5:24; II Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:9-10; Titus 3:4-5)

**Section 12. Restoration:** We believe in divine restoration to the image of God for the whole person. This restoration was obtained through the atonement in Christ's sacrificial death and, by faith, brings healing and wholeness in mind, body, soul, and spirit. Although Christians may

grieve the Holy Spirit, God's grace is sufficient for those who humbly repent, accept the correction of the Holy Spirit, trust the advocacy of Jesus, and mend their relationships. (Romans 8:11; I Peter 2:24-25; I John 1:9; Isaiah 53:4-5)

**Section 13. Baptism:** We believe that water baptism is a sacrament, commanded by our Lord Jesus, administered to believers as a declaration of their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and a symbol of the new covenant of grace. (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4)

**Section 14. The Lord's Supper:** We believe that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death. To those who rightly, worthily, and with faith receive it, the bread and the cup is a symbolic partaking of the body and blood of Christ, in remembrance of His life, death, and resurrection. The supper is also a symbol of the love and unity that Christians have among themselves. (Mark 14:22-24; John 6:53-58; I Corinthians 5:7-8; 11:23-29)

**Section 15. The Church:** The Church is the Body of Christ in the world. In worship the Church comes together to meet the holy God and to respond in obedience and love. In witness, the Church makes known the good news of Christ throughout the local community and to the ends of the earth, calling the lost to repentance and faith. In making disciples, converts are brought into the body, baptized, trained and equipped for service to Christ. In fellowship, redeemed people experience their oneness in Christ by sharing in one another's lives with love and concern. In service, the Church corporately cares for the needs of its own and others. The Body of Christ may corporately join together in specific geographic areas in what is referred to as local churches. These local churches are manifestations of the larger Body of Christ and reflect through their various traditions and history the nature of discipleship and growth toward Christlikeness. (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-13; Acts 2:42; 26:17)

## **Part B - Christian Conduct**

**Section 1. Worship:** Christians are called to the regular practice of public worship first for glorifying God, and for the edification and salvation of people. Worship should be in the language of the people and should guard against centering upon personality, performance, or object, instead calling those participating to draw near to God with their whole being. (Psalms 150; Acts 24:14)

**Section 2. Financial Giving:** The Scriptures provide a pattern for financial support of the Church through tithing, which should be expected of all believers, as well as through special offerings, as one is able and compelled, as a means to provide for specific needs as well as to express love for God, and to obey the command to care for the poor. Giving tithes and offerings should be practiced continually by all believers and are outward expressions of the unity of the church as it joins together in support of the work of God in the world. (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:20-22; Proverbs 11:24, 25, Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; I Corinthians 16:22; II Corinthians 8:7; 9:6-9)

**Section 3. Benevolence:** Scriptures are clear concerning helping those in need. We are encouraged to do good to all people as we have opportunity, with a special emphasis upon caring for those who profess to be fellow Christians, especially those of our own fellowship of believers. This is true for the local church as an organization as well as for the individual members of the church. (Proverbs 25:21; Proverbs 28:27; Isaiah 58:10; Acts 20:35; Galatians 6:10; I Timothy 6:18-19)

**Section 4. Marriage and Family:** At creation God instituted marriage for the well-being of humanity and procreation. Marriage is an institution of God described singularly as the lifelong and exclusive union of one man and one woman in a faithful relationship that the Scriptures call “one flesh.” Marriage is the only proper setting for sexual intimacy. Scriptures require purity before and faithfulness within marriage. Likewise, the Bible condemns all unnatural sexual behavior such as incest, child molestation, homosexual activity, bestiality, and prostitution. It clearly renounces as sinful, behaviors such as adultery, fornication, bisexual conduct, pornography or any attempt to alter one’s gender. A healthy marriage should provide a loving, life-giving context for raising children in the fear and instruction of the Lord. It is the foundation of the family, the basic structure of society. (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; Ephesians 5:22-33; I Corinthians 6:18-19; I Thessalonians 4:3)

**Section 5. Guidance and Biblical Counsel:** The Body of Christ has spiritual resources for those seeking help. The chief resources are the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, the Word, prayer, sacraments, counsel, support, and Christian community. Through these, God can bring healing and reconciliation. Such care and nurture of people is offered in programs through the wisdom, counsel, and support of those who are gifted and mature in faith. (Proverbs 12:18, 13:10; 15:22; 20:5; John 16:13; Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-2; Colossians 1:28; 3:16; II Timothy 3:16-17)

**Section 6. Discipline:** We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that every person is to be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes are unacceptable. It is within this context and with this mindset that Scriptural discipline is to be conducted. Discipline of board members, teachers, volunteers, and general members administered in truth and love, in a spirit of meekness and confidentiality provides for the restoration of the one subject to the discipline and hence the strengthening of the community. The steps of discipline are according to the pattern of Scripture: private confrontation, private confrontation with witnesses, meeting with an appropriate oversight group, review by the board or its designees for judgment leading to restoration or separation. (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1; Romans 16:17; II John 9-11; I Corinthians 5; II Corinthians 2:6-8; I Timothy 5:20)

## **Part C – Conclusion**

As ministers for Jesus Christ, we seek to be instruments of discipleship by developing the lives of youth to assume leadership and influence in culture through Christ-like lives of service in excellence. We draw upon the consensual wisdom of a variety of churches whose experience and wisdom may inform us for greater effectiveness in our calling.